

Britain: Pimlico Academy Students Destroy Tory Myths on Racism

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Boris Johnson owes his position as Prime Minister to institutional racism writes Andy Stowe.

Johnson was the public face of the Brexit campaign which galvanised racists with its slogan about 76 million Turkish citizens entering Britain if the country remained in the European Union.

This message was amplified by the racist Tory press which published lies about asylum seekers every day for years. Johnson personally contributed to a 375% increase in Islamophobic attacks on Muslim women with his comments on the burqa.

That's why no one can be seriously surprised when a report he commissioned says of slavery:

"There is a new story about the Caribbean experience which speaks to the slave period not only being about profit and suffering but how culturally African people transformed themselves."

This is a version of black history made to be palatable to white racists. It's essentially saying that a crime against humanity should also be taken in the context of how it gave its victims and their descendant's opportunities to travel and develop new art forms.

The document is full of similar horrors. It tells us that 8 White women in 100 000 die while giving birth. For Asian women, the figure almost doubles to 15 in 100 000 and for Black women, it more than quadruples to 34. In another staggering example of the tone-deafness for which this report will become notorious it brushes aside Black women's concerns at being four times more likely to die by saying:

"It is important that all involved in these conversations understand that highlighting this disparity without emphasising the low numbers overall, is unfair to expectant mothers everywhere."

What shines through the documents and much of the sympathetic commentary on it is the Tories' and the authors' terror of Black Lives Matter and Black people taking matters into their own hands. Tony Sewell, the reliable academic brought in to chair the commission which wrote the document was quite frank about that.

Sewell said the recommendation was a response to

"negative calls for 'decolonising' the curriculum",

adding:

"We have argued against bringing down statues, instead we want all children to reclaim their British

heritage."

Hope lies with young people like the students at Pimlico Academy. They've seen what's happened to their parents and grandparents. They know that their family members have put up with lifetimes of institutional racism and have taken action.

The Daily Heil has hyperventilated:

"The British flag had been removed and burnt by pupils in September before it was put back up. Over the weekend, anti-flag graffiti appeared on the school walls saying 'Ain't no black in the Union Jack', 'White schools for brown kids are u mad' and 'Pimlico Academy...run by racists... for profit'."

The school's racist decision to dictate the colour of hijabs and "a ban on afro haircuts which could "block the views" of other pupils in class" (sic) was the immediate cause of their strike which caused the school's management to back down.

Headteacher Daniel Smith taught his students, as well as Black and Asian young people all over the British state, two valuable lessons. The first is that institutional racism really does exist. It's in the curriculum and forces people who know the union jack is a butcher's apron to respect it. The other is that militant anti-racist action is the only way to defeat it.

The students of Pimlico are a lot smarter than the grandees wheeled out by the Tories to humour Daily Telegraph readers.

Andy Stowe

P.S.

• Anti*capitalistresistance. 5 April 2021:
<https://www.anticapitalistresistance.org/post/pimlico-academy-students-destroy-tory-myths-on-racism>